

## REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the Office Action mailed April 22, 2004. Claims 21-43 are pending. Applicants have amended claims 21 - 24, 33, and 35. Applicants have added new claims 40 - 43. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the application, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

### A. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner allowed claims 21 - 32 and 39. In addition, the Examiner indicated that claim 36 contained allowable subject matter.

Applicants have amended claim 21 in a manner that does not affect the claim scope. The amendments to claim 21 are only to clarify antecedent basis. Applicants appreciate the remarks made by the Examiner in paragraph 1 of the Office Action. It is believed that the amendments to claim 21 help to clarify the antecedent basis.

Dependent claims 22 - 24 have also been amended to clarify the antecedent basis.

Independent claim 40 is intended to be similar in scope to allowed claim 36. In particular, independent claim 40 includes original independent claim 33 and the limitations of original claim 36, although phrased in a different order for purposes of clarity. Claims 41 - 43 were added as dependent claims, dependent from new independent claim 40. It is respectfully submitted that each of these claims is allowable.

### B. Rejected Claims 33 - 35, 37, and 38

Independent claim 33 was rejected over a combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,071,456 to Binder et al. and U.S. Patent No. 4,349,363 to Patel et al. Applicants disagree with this rejection. It is believed that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to change the air filter configuration of Binder et al. in view of the teachings of Patel et al. Further, it is believed that even if there were such a suggestion, it would still not result in the claimed method.

To expedite prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended claim 33 to recite that the second end cap of the filter element is a closed end cap that has no apertures therethrough. Binder et al. and Patel et al. do not disclose or suggest such structure, in addition to other claimed features and steps. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 33 is allowable.

Applicants amended claim 35 in a manner that should not affect the scope. Specifically, claim 35 was amended to use language that has a better grammatical form than the original phrasing.

Claims 34 - 38 depend upon claim 33. It is respectfully submitted that each of these claims is allowable, as well.

C. Summary

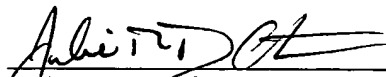
Applicants have reviewed the Statement of Reasons for Allowance. Applicants submit that there are many reasons for allowance which have not been stated by the Examiner.

In summary, claims 21 - 43 are pending. Most of these claims have already been indicated as containing allowable subject matter by the Examiner. Applicants request reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.  
P.O. Box 2903  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903  
(612) 332-5300

Date: 7-14-04

  
Julie R. Daughton  
Reg. No. 36,414  
JRD:st

